justify full time departmental offices. Branch Post Offices are opened subject to fulfilment of distance, income and population norms and to the extent resources are made available under Plan. These norms have been further relaxed for hilly, tribal, desert and remote areas. Since all Gram Panchayat villages would not fulfil these norms, it has not been possible to provide them with post offices. Where two norms are fulfilled, Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendras (PSSKs) are also being opened in a phased manner to provde basic postal services, subject to availability of resources. There are at present 6808 Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendras which provide counter services, exclusively in rural areas. In view of the above fact there are far flung villages which do not have post offices due to non- fulfilment of distance, income and population norms or which have no counter facilities through PSSKs. However, there is no State where post offices are situated only in select districts.

(c) to (e) Since post offices can be opened only subject to fulfilment of the existing norms and availability of resources, it is not possible to specify a time frame within which, this goal can be achieved.

Single Operating Licence

2950. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:

SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that TRAI wants to bring all segments of the telecom market under a single operating licence covering fixed, mobile, domestic, long distance and international calls;

(b) whether it is also a fact that TRAI wish to have uniform rules for all players;

(c) whether Government are thinking of scrapping regional fragmentation;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) how it helps the end-consumer?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) and (b) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has issued a consultation paper No. 3/2003 on Unified Licencing for Fixed and Mobile services on July 16, 2003 TRAI has also issued an addendum to its

above mentioned consultation paper on August 4, 2003 which mentions that the TRAI has also received comments that the scope of the Unified License should be extended to include services such as National Long Distance (NLD), International Long Distance (ILD), and Internet Services. The TRAI has already clarified that it is willing to consider all suggestions made in the process of consultations, and would welcome viable proposals for any such issue.

(c) and (d) The Government will consider the recommendations of TRAI whenever received.

(e) It would enable subscribers to subscribe to telecom services at a lower price because of reduction in costs due to economies of scale. It will also provide consumers a single window solution for various kinds of services.

Tele-density

2591. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI:
SHRI BAL KAVI BAIRAGI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) the State-wise tele-density (per 100 person) particularly in the States of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh in the years 1991-92 and 1999-2000;

(b) whether tele-density has been very low for Madhya Pradesh; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) The State-wise tele-density (per 100 person) including Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh in 1991-1992 and 1999-2000 are given in Statements I and II respectively (*See* below).

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The tele-density in Madhya Pradesh has been low compared to national average, as it depends upon demand which is further dependent upon:

(i) Per capita income
(ii) Developmental activity
(iii) Business and Commercial opportunity
(iv) Literacy rate.